

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Short term consultancy on the preparation of an Action Plan for the implementation of the Business Model of Ajara Forestry Agency in Khulo Municipality (Ajara Autonomous Republic, Georgia)

1. Background

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), jointly with WWF Germany, supports the project *“Improving the resilience of forest ecosystems through adaptive forest management in Georgia”* (the “Project”). The project is implemented in Autonomous Republic of Ajara, Georgia. It aims to incorporate climate adaptation issues in forest management, in order to ensure the resilience of forest ecosystems. The project is carried out over a three-year period (January 2015 – December 2017). It is implemented by WWF-Caucasus Programme Office (WWF-CauPO) in close coordination with WWF Germany and with the assistance of local project staff in Ajara. The key objectives of the project are:

- 1) *Decreasing the levels of forest degradation through forest rehabilitation and introduction of nature near silviculture principles.*
- 2) *Contribution to the conservation of forest ecosystems and their ecosystem services.*
- 3) *Increasing the resilience of forest ecosystems towards climate change through adaptive forest management.*
- 4) *Identification and mapping forests with High-Conservation Values.*
- 5) *Improvement of the livelihoods of local population.*
- 6) *Conducting awareness-raising activities for the general public, including schoolchildren.*
- 7) *Capacity building of relevant forestry authorities in Ajara.*

2. The Future Business Model of Ajara Forest Agency

One of the key tasks of the project involves capacity building of Ajara Forestry Agency, AFA (which has a status of Legal Entity of Public Law and is part of the Directorate of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Ajara). This task involves several components such as the supporting of forest inventory and management planning, learning from advanced international experiences and promoting sustainable forestry (close to nature silvicultural principles) “on the ground”.

Significant contribution to this overall task was made by the “Eco-corridors Programme in the Southern Caucasus”. The program is implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia by WWF-CauPO with funds provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW Development Bank. The consortium of GOPA Consultants, DFS and HessenForst are providing consulting services for implementation of the program. Ajara, as part of the West Lesser Caucasus Priority Conservation Area, is within the scope of this program.

Specifically, within the framework of the Eco-corridors Programme, a business model was prepared by WWF-CauPO for AFA in the period autumn 2016 – spring 2017. The business model envisages practical ways of development close-to-nature silviculture, sustainable use of (fire-)wood, management of protective functions of forests (erosion control) and other components of sustainable forestry. The respective document is available at WWF-CauPO and can be provided upon request. The next step is to support the implementation of this business model. Consequently, WWF-CauPO will hire a short-term consultant (hereafter “the consultant”) for preparation of an Action Plan as a basis for the initiation of the implementation of this model.

3. The objective of the assignment

The objective of this assignment is **to prepare a detailed Action Plan (AP)** for the implementation of the capacity building programme and investment for the AFA, presented in the business model, with Khulo Forest Administration as the pilot unit. The AP shall envisage the field testing of key forestry practices

described in the business model, for the subsequent analysis of their effectiveness. This analysis will become the basis for the final selection of detailed optimal management system for the implementation in the entire forest area in Ajara which is managed by AFA (the analysis itself, though, is beyond the scope of this assignment).

4. Scope of work

Total forest cover area within Khulo Forest Administration is about 36,700 ha (all managed by AFA). The AP will cover the period of five years. The main tasks of the consultant will include:

- Use the above-mentioned business model for AFA as the basis for the AP
- Develop a detailed Action Plan for the implementation of the business model in Khulo Forest Administration of Ajara (i.e. measures aimed at institutional strengthening and capacity building for the AFA)
- The AP shall take into consideration the socio-economic needs of local population
- It shall also include provisions for the active involvement of local communities and other key stakeholders in forest management and effective means of communication in general
- The AP shall include detailed time schedule as well as financial resources needed for the implementation of the key components of business model (including required investments and their costs and benefits)
- Present the results of the study to the AFA and other relevant stakeholders.

The consultant will closely cooperate and coordinate its work with WWF-CauPO, relevant staff of the AFA (and of the Directorate of Environment Protection and Natural Resources in general) and other relevant stakeholders.

5. Time Schedule and Reporting Obligations

The overall duration of the assignment is two calendar months starting in mid-August 2017. The estimated amount of work is 14 (fourteen) workdays within this time period, including at least one visit to Ajara. The consultant will be directly accountable to respective staff of WWF-CauPO, involved in the project. He/she will produce the following deliverables:

1. Detailed work plan and methods for the fulfilment of the assignment (within about one calendar week from the beginning of the assignment)
2. Interim report with the initial draft of the AP (within about one and a half calendar month from the beginning of the assignment)
3. Final version of the AP within about two calendar months from the beginning of the assignment, taking into consideration stakeholder views (above all those of the AFA staff).

Only after the formal acceptance of the final report by WWF-CauPO, can the contract be considered as completed.

7. Qualification Requirements

- Professional background in forest management with focus on close to nature silviculture principles
- Experience in planning and managing close to nature silviculture and all key forest functions, including wood production
- Knowledge of advanced international practices in these fields would be an asset
- Experience in capacity building for state forest agencies in the context of development cooperation
- Proficiency in English
- Working experience in the forestry sector in Ajara Autonomous Republic (Georgia) would be an advantage.